United Nations S/PV.6811

# Security Council

Sixty-seventh year

*Provisional*

**6811** th meeting
Thursday, 19 July 2012, 3 p.m.
New York

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| *President*: | Mr. Osorio | (Colombia) |
| *Members*: | Azerbaijan | Mr. Musayev |
| | China | Mr. Wang Min |
| | France | Mr. Bertoux |
| | Germany | Mr. Wittig |
| | Guatemala | Mr. Briz Gutiérrez |
| | India | Mr. Raguttahalli |
| | Morocco | Mr. Erroja |
| | Pakistan | Mr. Tarar |
| | Portugal | Mr. Moraes Cabral |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Zhukov |
| | South Africa | Mr. Laher |
| | Togo | Mr. M'Beou |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Wilson |
| | United States of America | Mrs. DiCarlo |

## Agenda

The situation concerning Iraq

Third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2001 (2011) (S/2012/535)

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*The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation concerning Iraq**

**Third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2001 (2011) (S/2012/535)**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Iraq to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Martin Kobler, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2012/535, which contains the third report of the Secretary-General pursuant resolution 2001 (2011).

I now give the floor to Mr. Kobler.

**Mr. Kobler**: I am pleased to introduce to the Council the third report of the Secretary-General pursuant to resolution 2001 (2011) (S/2012/535) on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). I will also brief Council members on the most recent developments in Iraq.

One year ago, my predecessor told Council members that he was cautiously optimistic about Iraq's future. Today, as the Council considers the renewal of the UNAMI mandate, Iraq has much to be proud of regarding what it has achieved. With the final withdrawal of United States troops at the end of last year, Iraq regained full control over its sovereign territory.

It has made committed efforts to enforce law and order across the country. Reclaiming its place at the diplomatic table, it successfully hosted the twenty-third Summit of the League of Arab States in March and talks between Iran and the permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany in May. Yet, my predecessor had tempered his cautious optimism with the caveat that determined leadership would be required within Iraq for the country to continue to progress.

As I sit before the Council today, Iraq is in the midst of a seven-month-long stalemate between the political blocs, a situation that continues to hamper progress in areas essential to Iraq's development, including a sustainable solution to the disputed internal boundaries; the unfinished constitutional agenda; the adoption of essential outstanding legislation; and the preparation of next year's provincial Council elections.

When the Council adopted resolution 1770 (2007), it gave UNAMI a mandate to advise, support and assist the Government and the people of Iraq. The question today is whether crucial obstacles can be overcome in order for the Iraqi State and society to begin to realize their full potential. In my assessment, the role of UNAMI will be more important than ever in supporting Iraq on its journey towards stability and development.

Since my last briefing to the Council (see S/PV.6747), I have strengthened my engagement with political leaders from all sides in Baghdad and in the Kurdistan region, met with representatives of many of Iraq's communities, and listened to the advice of Iraq's spiritual leaders, such as Grand Ayatollah Sistani in Najaf. I have also sought the views of the Governments of Iran, Kuwait and Turkey on the situation in the region.

The core of the UNAMI mandate is to support and to assist the people of Iraq, for it is the people of Iraq who want the political stalemate to end. It is they who want to have a life in security and prosperity and a better future for their children and who long for the day when the benefits from the natural wealth of the country will translate into the reliable delivery of electricity and other public services and economic development.

Almost seven years ago, the Iraqi people laid the foundations for democracy in their country by adopting their Constitution. Today, however, key institutions have yet to be established and fundamental legislation remains outstanding, including the establishment of the Federation Council; the strengthening of the judicial system; the legislation on revenue-sharing and hydrocarbons; and the protection of minorities, to mention but a few.

My colleagues and I have made the promotion of progress in those areas a priority. In particular, the legal and policy frameworks for sharing revenue need to be put in place. That would constitute a significant strengthening of the federal system, improve the environment for investment, and provide for the agreed

distribution of national wealth. Revenue-sharing is vital to helping improve Arab-Kurdish coexistence, to ensuring that Iraq remains a single federal State, and, above all, to advancing a solution of the disputed internal boundaries.

Making progress in unblocking Iraq's unfinished legislative agenda, however, requires an agreement among Iraq's political leaders that will end the political stalemate. Such an agreement must be reached through transparent and inclusive dialogue, in respect of the Constitution and in a spirit of compromise.

There is no democracy without elections. There are no credible elections without a strong and truly independent election commission. As we speak, my political deputy, Mr. György Busztin, is engaged in facilitation efforts to bring about the formation of a new Independent High Electoral Commission with a membership that is representative of the main components of Iraq, including women and minorities.

The urgent selection of Commissioners is essential to ensuring that the Provincial Council elections, due to take place in March 2013, can be conducted on time. I am concerned that the ongoing political stalemate is hindering the process, however. In recent days, I have discussed with political leaders, including Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, the need for a swift conclusion of the selection process and the adequate representation of women and minorities in the Commission. Today, I would like to reiterate my appeal to all political blocs to expedite the selection of professional commissioners. Here, UNAMI stands ready to actively assist.

The number of civilian casualties caused by terrorist attacks is increasing across Iraq. Since the beginning of this year, an average of 12 violent incidents per day have claimed a total of more than 1,300 victims, many of whom were innocent children and women who were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. Each victim is one too many.

The Iraqi authorities must continue to make every effort to identify the perpetrators of such acts of violence and to bring them to justice. The attacks are intended to ignite further violence. Despite the suffering, Iraqis from all walks of life and religious backgrounds must turn their back on past divisions and unite for a peaceful future.

Human rights are a cornerstone of Iraq's democratic future and are at the core of the United Nations mandate in Iraq. To that end, UNAMI continues to support the activities of the Ministry of Human Rights in ensuring that Iraq meets its international human rights obligations.

As I informed Council members in April, the Council of Representatives endorsed the appointment of the Commissioners of Iraq's first Independent High Commission for Human Rights. I am pleased to further report that the Commissioners have now met and started their work. UNAMI and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are supporting the Commission in that process.

The findings of the 2011 United Nations report on the human rights situation in Iraq, published in May, underlined the fragility of the human rights situation in Iraq. The report's conclusions largely coincided with the Ministry of Human Rights' own findings. While it is recognized that the Government of Iraq has made some progress in implementing measures to protect and to promote human rights, the impact on the overall human rights situation remains limited. The United Nations is assisting the Iraqi authorities in strengthening the rule of law and in boosting protection for human rights in Iraq in order to bring an end to abuses such as arbitrary arrests and detentions.

The economic, social and cultural rights of Iraqis are also matters of real concern. Poverty, high unemployment, economic stagnation, environmental degradation and a lack of basic services continue to affect large sections of the population. It is vital that Iraqis, in particular vulnerable groups, be provided with better access to basic services, social welfare and community development programmes and opportunities for education. Nothing less is required in order to provide for the success of future generations. The rights of all Iraqis, including minorities, must be protected, as stipulated in the Iraqi Constitution.

Iraq retains the death penalty for a large number of crimes. I therefore reiterate the call by the Secretary-General and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Government of Iraq to establish a moratorium on all executions with a view to their abolition. I welcome the fact that the authorities in the Kurdistan region continue to implement a moratorium on carrying out executions, which has been in place since 2007.

Let me now turn to some of the recent regional and international developments pertaining to Iraq. As

members know, Prime Minister Al-Maliki's visit to Kuwait in March was followed by the historic visit of the Amir of Kuwait to Baghdad to attend the Arab Summit. Those two visits have markedly improved bilateral relations between Kuwait and Iraq and facilitated the resumption of the meetings of the Joint Iraq-Kuwait Ministerial Committee.

Iraq has also taken decisive steps to finalize the Iraq-Kuwait boundary maintenance project, in accordance with resolution 833 (1993). At the request of both parties, the United Nations is preparing for the maintenance work to start by 31 October, provided that key prerequisites, such as the removal of obstacles on the border, are met. Bringing all Chapter VII obligations pertaining to Kuwait to a satisfactory close will boost prospects for bilateral trade, and investment, promote regional cooperation and lead to the restoration of Iraq's rightful standing within the international community.

In this regard, I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome the adoption on 28 June by the Council of Representatives of a law ratifying the Additional Protocol to the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and I encourage the Government of Iraq to take the remaining steps to ensure its entry into force as soon as possible.

The intensity and frequency of sand and dust storms, mainly generated from inside Iraq, have increased in recent years. They have a significant impact on public health in Iraq and in the wider region, especially for the most vulnerable, and they affect transport and trade. During my visit to Kuwait in June, and following an offer by the Amir of Kuwait to invest a portion of Iraq's outstanding war compensation funds back into Iraq, I proposed an environmental fund to combat sand and dust storms. If Iraq and Kuwait agree, the fund could be used to undertake activities to reduce that health hazard, which is impeding daily life in the region. Such activities might include improving water resource management, anti-desertification, reforestation and agricultural projects.

Needless to say, the ongoing violence in Syria is a source of deep concern, given the potential for the spread of instability and violence, humanitarian fallout and political repercussions. The United Nations system in Iraq is putting in place contingency plans for a possible humanitarian emergency. In this connection, I recently visited a refugee camp in the Kurdistan region for those displaced by the conflict in Syria. So far, with 7,000 refugees, their numbers are manageable. On 10 July, the United Nations and the League of Arab States Joint Special Envoy for Syria, Mr. Kofi Annan, visited Iraq and met with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki. The Government of Iraq was very clear on the importance of a political transition that is Syrian-led and Syrian-owned, and that ensures that the legitimate and democratic aspirations of the Syrian people are fully realized.

The United Nations in Iraq also continues to support the development of effective, accountable and transparent State institutions. My new Deputy, and Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, Ms. Jacqueline Badcock, took up her duties on 13 May. She has already shown her determination and leadership in coordinating the United Nations country team to deliver as one. I have asked her to ensure that the country team strengthens its presence and activities across the country. That is taking shape in Basra. There, United Nations agencies, funds and programmes can assist in bringing the quality of life in that oil-rich province to the levels found in other oil-rich countries in the region.

Let me briefly highlight two of the priority areas with important political, security and development implications, where the United Nations system in Iraq is working as one.

Iraq is one of the most youthful countries in the world, with 50 per cent of the population under the age of 18. At the same time, the unemployment rate for youth is more than double the domestic average, at 23 per cent. The United Nations system is supporting programmes aimed at increasing youth participation in the social, political and economic spheres. Building on the International Year of Youth 2011, the United Nations is supporting civil society groups to strengthen their role in ensuring democratic space and freedoms. The third UNDP National Human Development Report focuses on youth and will be published later this year.

As with youth, women are important actors in Iraq's development, yet the illiteracy rate among Iraqi women is more than double that of Iraqi men. In my meetings with Iraqi governmental interlocutors, as well as women's civil society organizations, I advocate for the adoption and implementation of the proposed national strategy on the advancement of women. The United Nations family is working to support women

in taking up their role in political and economic life. The United Nations is also continuing to work to implement resolution 1325 (2000) and to encourage the Government to fulfil its commitments in that regard.

Finally, I still remain very concerned by the lack of progress in resolving the issue of Camp Ashraf. In the past months, 2,000 residents of Camp Ashraf have relocated to Camp Hurriya. Approximately 1,200 remain in Camp Ashraf. The several deadlines set by the Government of Iraq have been extended. I thank the Government of Iraq for its flexibility in this regard, and I appeal to the Iraqi authorities to continue the process to resolve the relocation peacefully. Our commitment is strictly humanitarian; it is to facilitate a voluntary, temporary relocation of residents to Camp Hurriya as a first step of resettlement to countries outside Iraq. However, the success of a facilitator depends at least on good will. There can no facilitation without constructive and practical dialogue.

We are faced with three main challenges. First, recent weeks have witnessed difficulties in maintaining dialogue between UNAMI and the residents and between the residents and the Government of Iraq, reinforcing a perception that residents lack the genuine will to participate in the process facilitated by UNAMI. Secondly, responsibility also falls on the many international supporters. It is of great importance that they contribute to positively influence the residents' positions. Thirdly, to date, almost no Member State has stepped forward to offer resettlement to eligible former Ashraf residents.

There must be a way out of Camp Hurriya in the foreseeable future. Without the prospect of resettlement, the ongoing process runs the risk of collapsing. The temporary transit location of Camp Hurriya has the capacity to accommodate the remaining 1,200 residents and meet acceptable humanitarian standards. Both UNAMI and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have devoted substantial energy and resources to resolving the issue. More than 100 staff members are dedicated to the project in the meantime.

I appeal to the Government of Iraq to be generous, particularly in terms of humanitarian needs like water and electricity, and to avoid violence under any circumstances. I also appeal to Camp residents to abide by Iraqi laws and avoid provocation and violence. Time for finding a sustainable solution is running out. The Government's patience is wearing thin. I would therefore like to echo the Secretary-General and urge Camp Ashraf residents to cooperate with Iraqi authorities and to relocate from Camp Ashraf to Camp Hurriya. It is also imperative that third countries step forward to accept eligible residents for resettlement as soon as possible, without which there can be no durable solution.

In my introduction, I posed the question of whether the people of Iraq still need UNAMI. I am convinced that UNAMI is needed more than ever to help Iraq complete its transition to a stable and prosperous democracy. UNAMI has the legitimacy and the standing to represent the international community in Iraq. Iraqis from all communities look to UNAMI to protect their aspirations and to ensure that their needs are met. With the Security Council's support, UNAMI will continue its efforts to address the many outstanding issues crucial to securing Iraq's future. The substantial cut of 20 per cent of UNAMI's budget in 2013 requires that we do more with less. In that context, the Mission may need to reconsider some areas of operation.

I should like to sincerely thank the members of the Council for their continued support, the Government of Iraq and the wider membership of the United Nations, as well as the staff of UNAMI, for their unrelenting commitment and dedication to implementing our mandate.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank Mr. Kobler for his comprehensive briefing.

I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Iraq.

**Mr. Al Bayati** (Iraq): Allow me at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, and your country on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for this month and to extend my thanks to the previous President, the Permanent Representative of the People's Republic of China, for his efforts during the month of June.

I also would like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Martin Kobler, and his team in Baghdad and New York for their tireless efforts to assist the Government and people of Iraq.

Having reviewed the report of the Secretary-General on UNAMI's work in Iraq, document (S/2012/535), I would like to present the following comments.

On the political and security situation, the Iraqi people lived for decades under the brutal and dictatorial regime of Saddam Hussein, which destroyed the country and had severe and negative effects on the mentality of the Iraqi people. However, after the fall of Saddam's regime in 2003, the Iraqi people decided to go through the process of building a new Iraq, which is a constitutional, parliamentary and a federal democracy. Until today, in Iraq we have faced difficulties, problems and challenges, many of which are the product of Saddam's legacy. Despite the problems among the political groups in Iraq regarding many important political issues, it is notable that they have conducted their differences within peaceful means, as stipulayed in the Iraqi Constitution for which the Iraqi people voted.

These political differences have not crossed legal and constitutional boundaries, and no political party has threatened to use force or violence to impose its will and political agenda. Therefore, I can say that the Iraqi people started to learn to shout at each other instead of shooting at each other, and to use ballots rather than bullets to achieve their political objectives and to express their views.

Iraq's President, Mr. Jalal Talabani, as a guardian of the Constitution and within his mission to resolve the current political situation, which was described by my friend Mr. Kobler as a stalemate, has made intensive efforts and held many meetings with senior leaders of the country, parliamentary blocs and political parties, in which he called on all parties to put the interests of the country and its citizens above any other interest or consideration.

In a statement on 17 May, he called on all political rivals to stop reciprocal media campaigns, to reject convulsive speech, to adopt constructive dialogue aimed at reaching and promoting the commonalities, and not to deepen and expand their differences. He also called on them in his statement to consider the Constitution as their point of reference and to commit themselves to the basic principle the Government is based on, which is a true partnership in managing authority and in taking responsibility.

In that context, during his meeting with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq, Mr. Martin Kobler, on 12 June, the President affirmed his ongoing efforts to bring the views of the political rivals closer together and to prevent the dangers of segregation in the country. He also mentioned that Iraq is in dire need of political harmony among political rivals and of achieving a national partnership in administrating the country.

On the other hand, the Prime Minister, Mr. Nuri Kamel al-Maliki, issued a press statement on 10 June in which he called on all political partners to come at the dialogue table and to be open to discussing all the differences that have been set out in all papers and initiatives, in the spirit of national responsibility. He also called on them to strive to find solutions and move towards the construction and reconstruction process, including State-building and establishing State institutions on a constitutional basis, and to accelerate the allocation of services to citizens. He affirmed in another statement, issued on 27 June, his commitment to developing the political process and enforcing democracy, and he renewed his call for a dialogue based on the Constitution and for reforms in all State institutions.

Within the framework of the intensive efforts made by the Iraqi Government to grant more authority to provincial councils, the Prime Minister chaired a meeting of the regular session of the Council of Ministers in Dhi Qar province on 12 June. In the meeting, the Prime Minister renewed his assertion that the purpose of holding the Council's meetings in the provinces, as has been done in Mosul, Kirkuk and Basra provinces, is to get a closer look at their problems and needs and to support and help local Governments to improve the provinces and accelerate services provided to citizens in all sectors.

The security situation in Iraq has witnessed an enormous and noticeable improvement. Statistics provided by the Ministry of Health point to a continuing decline in the numbers of civilian victims of terrorism in 2011 as compared to statistics recorded in 2009 and 2010. The number of terrorism victims declined by 20 per cent in 2010, as compared with its level in 2009, and decreased by 14 per cent in 2011, as compared to 2010. This year, as Mr. Kobler mentioned, there have been more terrorist attacks, but we hope that for the rest of the year we will see more and more improvements in security as the Government is taking all measures to try to stop the terrorists from achieving their cynical objectives.

The improved security situation has encouraged many Iraqi refugees to return to Iraq, and statistics of

the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees point to the fact that the number of Iraqi refugees, for example in Syria, has declined to 87,000 this year from 150,000 last year.

On the social and economic situation, the Government of Iraq has stressed that the duty of all officials in all Government sectors is to meet the demands of Iraqi citizens with all its available resources and to improve services for the Iraqi people. The Government has called on everyone to cooperate with it in order to alleviate the suffering of the citizens and to provide them with all possible services. The Government of Iraq also affirms its commitment to the economic openness plan towards all countries of the world.

In that regard, I would like to point to the increase in crude oil exports for the month of May and its positive effect on the economy in Iraq. Total exports reached 76 million barrels in May, with a value of $7,831,000,000 and with an average price of approximately $103 per barrel.

I would also like to point to the fourth licensing round in the Ministry of Oil, which granted a consortium of Kuwait Energy, the Turkish Petroleum Corporation and the United Arab Emirates Dragon Oil company with a service and investment contract for exploration of block 9 in Basra province over an area of 900 square kilometres with oil potential. This licensing round came as part of the policy of receiving and opening offers, in a very transparent way, from international oil companies that are eligible to compete for service contracts for exploration areas listed in the fourth licensing round, which includes 12 locations with six exploration areas spread over a number of provinces.

The fourth licensing round for the exploration of oil and gas was opened in the presence of Mr. Hussein al-Shahristani, Deputy Prime Minister for Energy Affairs, Mr. Abdul-Kareem Luaibi, Minister of Oil, and a number of members of Parliament, presidents of provincial councils, Ambassadors and representatives of the international oil companies. Forty-seven companies from Egypt, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, Russia, China, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Norway, Romania, Croatia, South Korea, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Turkey and Angola participated in this round.

The Ministry of Oil also announced that Iraq's oil production for the next 20 years will be 60 billion barrels, with an estimated value of $5 trillion, based on estimated price of $85 per barrel. The Ministry is currently working on constructing four new refineries in Iraqi provinces through a process of foreign investment. The establishment of those refineries will have a positive effect on the Iraqi economy by increasing the production of oil products, which will reflect positively on the fuel distribution to Iraqi citizens.

Iraq has started oil production at the new Al-Ahdab oil field in Wasit province in central Iraq, which is managed by the Chinese National Petroleum Company with a production level of 60,000 barrels per day. The accompanied natural gas from this field will be used to provide fuel for Al-Kahlaa power station in Misan province. Through the licensing rounds, Iraq is seeking to increase its oil production to meet domestic demand and to export the surplus, in addition to increasing its oil reserves by new discoveries in the new block offered to international companies for exploration. Those steps affirm that, after less than a year and a half of implementation of the previous round of contracts, Iraq has been able to increase its oil production by more than 500,000 barrels of oil a day.

I also would like to point out that an Iraqi delegation headed by Mr. Hoshyar Zebari, Minister for Foreign Affairs, signed in Brussels on 11 May the European Union-Iraq Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. That agreement is a comprehensive long-term treaty between parties that believe in the goals and principles of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and are committed to the principles of democracy. During the visit, discussions were held regarding work procedures that would contribute to the implementation of the Agreement for joint cooperation on issues relating to investment and energy. Iraq and the European Union also touched on the timing of implementing the most important issues covered by this Agreement, including political dialogue, in addition to touching on political issues relating to the achievement of stability and peace in the Arab region. I also would like to point to the visit of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Bulgaria and Poland, as representatives of the European Union, to Baghdad on 23 June to discuss the implementation mechanism of the Agreement with Iraqi officials.

With regard to the human rights situation, Iraq is entering a new era in which the Iraqis are building the

foundation of democracy and all kinds of freedoms: freedom of the press, freedom to establish political parties and freedom of expression, as well as pluralism and the peaceful transition of power. Iraq has also continued to move towards deepening the bonds of friendship and cooperation with neighbouring countries in order to regain its positive role and live in peace with its people and neighbours in a way that strengthens the chances for stability and peace in the region.

Iraq is also committed to abiding by the decisions of the Human Rights Council and has made considerable progress and achieved important accomplishments in protecting and respecting human rights, despite the challenges and difficulties. It has done so through the work of the competent institutions specialized in that field, starting with the Human Rights Committee in Parliament, the Ministry of Human Rights and its offices located throughout Baghdad and the provinces, and human rights committees in the provincial councils, and ending with the establishment of the Independent High Commission for Human Rights. Also, many important regulations have been issued regarding human rights and several laws and decrees issued by the former regime that were contrary to the principles of human rights were either cancelled or amended.

Iraq presented its report during the Universal Periodic Review of the Human Rights Council in Geneva and agreed on the Council's recommendations, which were formulated with the vision and ideas of the Ministry of Human Rights within the framework of the national plan for human rights, which is considered to be the first plan in the history of the Iraqi State to become a road map in that field. Iraq also submitted its report regarding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and is preparing to welcome the Special Rapporteur on torture, following an invitation from Iraq.

In this regard, I would like to point to the creation of the Independent High Commission for Human Rights, which is a historic achievement for Iraq and a sign of its true intention to respect and promote human rights in the country. What makes its creation unique is the mechanism formulated by the Commission's Law No. 54 of 2009, which ensures transparency, professionalism, democracy and the Paris standards in creating an Independent Commission by the Parliamentary Human Rights Committee, the Parliamentary Committee of Experts, and the rest of the participants, which was crowned by the House of Representatives' approval of the members of the Board of the Commissioners. It added an important institution to the process of building a comprehensive system for promoting human rights that enjoys the backing and support of the United Nations and its agencies.

The freedoms of the press and expression are two of the most important safeguards for an effective monitoring mechanism for the fourth authority on the situation of human rights and the rule of law in Iraq. The Constitution ensures freedom of expression and opinion by all means and the freedom of the press, print, advertising, the media and publishing. Freedom of expression and opinion are centre pillars in democracy-building, which has continued to evolve since 2003.

Law No. 22 on protecting journalists was adopted; the reason stated for its adoption was to respect freedom of the press and opinion, to guarantee the rights of journalists and to emphasize their role in establishing democracy in the new Iraq. The important role of journalists is to complement the role of human rights observers. Pursuant to article 2, the law aims to promote the rights of journalists and provide them with protection in the Republic. Several items in the law deal with the legal assurances for journalists to perform their work with freedom and ease.

I would like to affirm that Iraq has fulfilled its humanitarian and international obligations towards the residents of Camp New Iraq, which used to be called Camp Ashraf. As Mr. Kobler mentioned, the Iraqi Government has showed flexibility in relocating the Camp's residents. Iraq has also collaborated fully with Special Representative Kobler and with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in solving the issue of the Camp and relocating its residents to Camp Hurriya. The Iraqi Government calls on the members of the European Union and other countries to facilitate the process of relocating the Camp's residents as a final solution to this problem.

With regard to the regional and international situation, in accordance with Iraq's responsibility towards the region and the world, as a peaceful State aiming to establish international peace and security through cooperative work to achieve the goals and aims of the United Nations Charter, the Iraqi Government, after hosting the Arab summit in March, worked on

holding a meeting of the five plus one group (P5+1) and the European Union with the delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the Iranian nuclear programme, on 23 and 24 May. The meeting was held to discuss this important and sensitive issue in an Arab capital, which reflects the interest of Arab countries and their people in dealing with that issue through peaceful means and in taking responsibility in protecting the region and its people from any war or conflict. In a statement issued by the P5+1 and delivered by Ms. Catherine Ashton, European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, in a press conference on 24 May, she expressed her thanks to the Iraqi Government, and especially to Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hoshyar Zebari, for the exceptional hospitality and organization of those meetings.

Within the framework of Iraq's openness to all countries of the world, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hoshyar Zebari visited Moscow on 14 June upon invitation from his Russian counterpart, Mr. Sergey Lavrov. During the visit, the two Ministers discussed the results of the nuclear talks conducted in Baghdad between the six countries and Iran and the role played by Iraq in facilitating that meeting as a prelude to the meeting that followed in Moscow. An agreement was reached on a protocol for political and diplomatic collaboration between the Iraqi Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Russian Federation. Furthermore, the work of Russian companies in the oil, gas and electricity sectors was discussed during the meeting, in addition to military collaboration and the idea of establishing an air travel route between Baghdad and Moscow.

I would also like to point to the active role of Mr. Hoshyar Zebari, Minister for Foreign Affairs, who headed the Iraqi delegation participating in the meeting of the international working group on Syria in Geneva on 30 June and the high-level ministerial meeting held to prepare the final document that was produced by the group's meeting. Iraq offered significant observations that reflected its position in dealing with the Syrian crisis, which was agreed in the outcome document. Iraq's Minister of Foreign Affairs also participated in the Syrian opposition conference on 2 July in Cairo in his capacity as Chair of the League of Arab States.

In the framework of Iraq's desire to strengthen its bonds with Arab countries, Mr. Hoshyar Zebari met with Mr. Mohamed Morsy, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt. In the meeting, Mr. Zebari conveyed the greetings and congratulations of President of Iraq Jalal Talabani, Prime Minister Nuri Al-Maliki and the Iraqi people upon the election of Mr. Morsy as the new President. Mr. Zebari stressed the importance of the bilateral relations between the two countries on the official and popular levels, and Iraq's desire to improve their relations, which would serve the interests of the two countries.

In the light of implementing Iraq's obligations imposed under resolution 1957 (2010) in December 2010, which lifted the sanctions against Iraq, and following Iraq's voluntary implementation of the Additional Protocol to its Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Iraqi Parliament ratified the Additional Protocol on 28 June.

Concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, I would like to affirm that Iraq is committed to resolving all unresolved issues with our neighbour Kuwait through friendly relations and negotiations. I also assure the Council that there is positive collaboration and exchange between the Governments of Iraq and Kuwait with a view to settling all the unresolved issues between the two countries resulting from Saddam's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. Resolving these remaining issues is a top priority for us in Iraq. I affirm my country's commitment to fulfilling the remaining obligations within the framework of the relevant resolutions adopted by the Security Council on the situation between Iraq and Kuwait.

In this context, the Iraqi Government, in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross and with some friendly countries, has made intensive efforts to locate the remains of missing Kuwaitis. The Iraqi authorities have searched official records and mass graves for the purpose of finding the remains of the missing Kuwaitis. We have achieved good results in this regard and are pursuing our earnest efforts to close this file.

In the context of implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions and of efforts made by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to close the file of Kuwaiti property taken over by the former regime in 1990, on 16 April, in the headquarters of the Central Bank of Kuwait, paper notes, metal currency, documents and keys belonging to the Central Bank of Kuwait were handed over to the Kuwaiti side. On 17 April, 15 microfilm cassettes containing the archives of the Kuwaiti newspaper

Al Anbar were transferred to the Kuwaiti authorities in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I would also like to point to the meeting of the joint Iraqi-Kuwaiti Ministerial Committee that was held in Baghdad on 29 April, at which a number of issues were discussed, most importantly Iraq's obligations towards international resolutions, land borders, freedom of navigation in Khor Abdallah, missing Iraqis and Kuwaitis, Kuwaiti loans to Iraq, compensations, Kuwait's new Mubarak Port, the establishment of a Gulf hunting area, and the opening of a Kuwaiti consulates in Basra and Erbil.

At the end of the meeting, the following documents were signed: the minutes of the meeting of the second session of the High Committee, at which an inventory of all issues was identified, signed by the Foreign Ministers of the two countries; the agreement to establish a joint collaboration committee between Iraq and Kuwait, signed by the Foreign Ministers of the two countries; and an agreement between Iraq and Kuwait regarding the establishment of a joint management committee to facilitate and organize navigation in Khor Abdullah, signed by the Transportation Ministers of the two countries. An agreement was also reached to sign other accords after concluding the legal steps in each country during the visit of the Prime Minister of Kuwait to Baghdad before the end of this year.

A positive environment has prevailed at the meetings of the committee and sub-committees, as has a common dedication to the importance of achieving noticeable improvement in Iraqi-Kuwaiti relations. All these things have been achieved as a result of the political will of the leaders of the two countries. We hope that the achievements of the 29 April meeting will pave the way for Iraq's exit from the provisions of Chapter VII, especially when an understanding on specific mechanisms and joint vision for the future steps is reached.

In conclusion, I would like to point to the letter of the Foreign Minister of Iraq, Mr. Hoshyar Zebari, addressed to Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and dated 28 June 2012, which states Iraq's desire for the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq to be extended for a period of 12 months (S/2012/520, annex). I also affirm my Government's appreciation for the role played by UNAMI in Iraq and New York in helping Iraq, and for the efforts made by Special Representative Martin Kobler to provide the support requested by the Iraqi Government in line with the mechanisms agreed upon between the two sides. I agree with the statement made by my friend Martin Kobler to the effect that UNAMI is needed now more than ever in Iraq.

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): There are no more names on the list of speakers.

I now invite members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on this subject.

*The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.*